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The

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: broadcaster and historian Dan Snow

The prized possession you value above The pet hate that makes your all others... My books. I have about 1,000 and each one evokes memories of what life was like when I read them.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not taking up a rowing scholarship at University of California, Berkeley, after I finished at Oxford. It would have been amazing. Instead, I went to work with my Dad [broadcaster Peter Snow] at the BBC, but sometimes you face big decisions and there's no wrong answer.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... One Hundred Years Of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez. I read it when I was 17 and it filled me with a yearning to enter an adult world that was exot-

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd film the intimate moments of the world's most powerful and pompous men, then broadcast it. Hopefully, it would take them down a peg or two.

ic, erotic and thrilling.

The event that altered the course of your life and charac-

ter... Losing the Boat Race with Oxford in 1999. I realised that life was not a golden progression from one success to another and that I needed to work harder.

hackles rise... Betraying children by discouraging them from aiming high.

The temptation you wish you could resist...

Salt and vinegar crisps. I ration myself to one packet a week because they're so bad for you.

The film you can watch

time and time again... The Last Of The Mohicans with Daniel Day-Lewis. The acting, story, look and sound are amazing. I'm fascinated by 18th-century America.

> The person who has influenced you most... My mum, Ann. She's always struck a balance between work and fun, compassion and tough love.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Horatio Nelson. I'd love to experience his legendary charisma. He got seasick, so I'd give him a wide berth at sea.

> Left: Nelson. Above: Salt and vinegar crisps. Right: Assiniboine Provincial Park

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I'm

obsessed with preparing for the apocalypse! I doubt our infrastructure could cope with a large solar flare.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... You will fail at lots of things, but never let that stop you.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... The fearlessness of my 23-year-old self. When my daughter was born [Zia, now three], I went to Syria to make a programme about the war and I realised I was being selfish. I have responsibilities now and shouldn't have been running around a battlefield [Dan is now 36].

The unending quest that drives you **On...** To see all the ancient ruins of past civilisations, particularly those in Central and South America.

The poem that touches your soul... Ulysses by Tennyson. It has a verse for almost every situation we face in life.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... Nearly everyone thinks that Jon Snow is my dad. Dad is Peter and Jon is my first cousin once removed!

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd assassinate warlords from Syria to the Congo.

The song that means most to you... Slide Away by Oasis. I was 15 when it came out in 1994 and my world was opening up as childhood slid off me.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...

I'd spend all day with my wife Edwina with our six-month-old son Wolf strapped to my stomach and Zia in the backpack. We'd watch dawn come up on a kayak in Fiordland, South Island, New Zealand. Breakfast would be pastries in a cafe in Paris. We'd hike along the South Downs then whizz around the Roman ruins in Libya. A speed boat would then take us to a lunch of local delicacies in Byblos, Lebanon. After that, we'd raft down the Columbia River in Canada, stopping off in Assiniboine Provincial Park in British Columbia. I'd have a Kokanee beer there before watching the sunset in Stone Town, Zanzibar. We'd have a cocktail on the quayside in Portofino, Italy, before watching the Northern Lights in Scotland. Then we'd have Beef Wellington for dinner in a pub in Derbyshire with a glass or two of red wine. Edwina and I would have a night out in New

York, then I'd finish the day looking at the stars from a raft floating 1,000 miles east of Newfoundland.

'I'm obsessed with preparing for the apocalypse. I don't think we can survive a large solar flare'

> The happiest moment you will cherish forever... The day I left a summer job in the Canadian Rocky Mountains when I was 18. To re-enter civilisation, I had to run along tiny trails, shouting out to ward off grizzly bears, but I didn't have a trouble on my mind.

The saddest time that shook your world... In 2013, my wife lost our child six months into her pregnancy.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To read War And Peace. I have got to get that sorted!

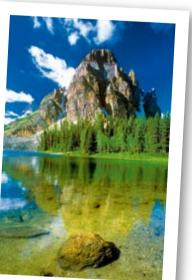
The philosophy that underpins your life... Life is best organised as a series of adventures from a secure base.

The order of service at your funeral... Just friends and family telling silly, weird stories. My ashes can be thrown into the wind on the South Coast.

The way you want to be remembered...

As someone who never took being happy and alive for granted.

The Plug... Dan has produced a series of history Apps. Find them in the Apple App Store or visit timelineww2.com. ■ As told to Rob McGibbon



Lara Pulver stars in Spooks movie The Greater Good – in cinemas from Friday. Alan Ayckbourn's comedy Communicating Doors with Imogen

Stubbs is at London's Menier Chocolate Factory from Thursday. And

the new album from Mumford & Sons, Wilder Mind, is out Monday

NEXT WEEK

 John Craven on presenting Simon Cowell's new quiz show Beat The Brain

> Monty Don sings the praises of the Chelsea Flower Show ● PLUS Britain's best TV listings

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